

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Jessica P Champion

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Bannach Elementary

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5400 Walter Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Stevens Point WI 54482-9280
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Portage County

Telephone (715) 345-5668

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Web site/URL

https://www.pointschools.net/Banna
ch

E-mail jchampion@pointschools.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Craig Gerlach

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail cgerlach@pointschools.net

District Name Stevens Point Area Public School District Tel. (715) 345-5456

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Ms Meg Erler

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 12 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	33	27	60
1	28	20	48
2	44	26	70
3	37	30	67
4	28	28	56
5	25	29	54
6	33	20	53
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	228	180	408

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 86 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 7%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	19
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	388
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
16 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Hmong, Spanish, Urdu, Tamil, and Chinese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %
Total number students who qualify: 72

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %
62 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>13</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>4</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>39</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 9
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Do what is best for students and expect students to do their best.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Hello and welcome to Bannach Elementary home of the Bulldogs! If you are from the Stevens Point area, the last name Bannach is most likely familiar to you. For those who are not, we would like to share a bit of history. Marion Bannach was one of 12 children born to Polish immigrants on September 7, 1890. Ms. Bannach graduated from college in 1913, taught in our area rural schools, and became Superintendent of Schools for Portage County where she served for over 40 years. She embodied the phrase, "Whatever works to help children learn, that's the right thing to do." She was widely recognized as a woman ahead of her time - dedicated, career-minded, respected, intellectual, and caring. Marion is most remembered for her deep love of children. As a result of her lifelong commitment to our community children, Bannach Elementary became her name-sake.

Bannach is a suburban elementary school located in the heart of a residential neighborhood in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Of the 7,200 students district-wide, covering over 440 square miles, a little over 400 children attend our Kindergarten - 6th grade building. Bannach's ethnic and cultural diversity is rather limited - 85% of our students are white, approximately 18% of our children are economically disadvantaged, and 15% of our student body receives support through special education plans.

We have made great strides in methodologies, classroom practices, and mindsets. Bannach has made progress in the design and implementation of curriculum with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) while developing more culturally responsive practices to support both academics and the social and emotional development of our children. Bannach staff consistently delivers programming using a multi-categorical approach for students with a variety of abilities and/or disabilities. We put Marion Bannach's message into action; whatever works to help children learn, that is what is right for our students.

Nine years ago, the Stevens Point School District began the journey of reframing our educational practices by implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which coincided with the decision to disband co-located programming enabling all students to attend their neighborhood school. The district focused staff development around differentiation and inclusion, and retooled the elementary schedule to maximize collaborative discussions for core classroom teachers. As a result, students were mainstreamed in inclusive and differentiated classroom environments which surrounded them with grade-level peers and rich discussions.

The mission of Bannach is to, "Do what is best for students and expect students to do their best." These are not merely words on a page, but actions that lead us to create a very positive school culture on a daily basis. Bannach has a long-standing history of excellence, achieved by making everyone feel welcomed and important every day. We provide the challenges and supports needed to ensure that all students reach their academic potential and become positive, contributing members of society.

Our overarching goal is to enrich student development and growth while providing programming that promotes success. We put this into practice through Bannach's inclusive and extended day programs, such as, Student Council, Safety Cadets, Kids Care Club, PAWS Pride Team, Orchestra, STEM Scouts, Band, Read-In Trivia Contest, Kiwanis Award, and Optimist Award. Basketball, volleyball, and wrestling are programs tracked for the purpose of recording trends and patterns of athletic, extracurricular, and recreational activities, which consistently show high numbers of student involvement.

Bannach's students, parents, and staff take great pride in our level of community involvement. We search for ways to lend a helping hand to many organizations: the United Way, Adopt-A-Highway, Humane Society, Operation Bootstrap, Salvation Army bell ringing, American Red Cross donations for local/global relief, sponsoring veterans for the WWII and Korean War Honor Flights, collecting over \$50,000 for the American Heart Association Jump Rope for Heart, Ronald McDonald House donations, making fleece blankets for a crisis center, collecting gently used shoes for citizens in Guatemala, and raising money to build wells in Cameroon, Africa. Our participation in these various projects exemplifies our commitment to a greater community and contributes to the warm, welcoming environment here at Bannach Elementary.

Bannach's staff have received grants to provide numerous opportunities for our Bulldogs. One grant awarded \$10,000, which was used to purchase robotics for our 6th graders. Another was used for enrichment activities to enable students to explore and attend community outings and activities they might not have otherwise had the opportunity to experience. Our PTO is very committed to supporting all aspects of child development, which includes purchasing: playground equipment, Chromebooks, SMART Boards, Mimio-Teach Bars, shade trees, Buddy Benches, and pavilions.

Our moral compass is devised around four pillars of understanding: Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible. We take the Be Kind pillar to a whole new level by participating in World Kindness Week and implementing lessons into our curriculum through the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. Kindness is not just a goal, but actions that we embrace throughout every aspect of what we do.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Bannach uses a variety of materials and methods to teach students during the 120-minute literacy block, based around the CCSS. The district's philosophy supports a scaffolded, balanced literacy model of reading and writing instruction. This fosters an integration of teacher support and student autonomy. Teachers provide explicit instruction and support to ensure students are successful. Students are given opportunities to understand concepts and develop skills through both collaborative and independent practice. Learning occurs when students are reading, writing, listening, and speaking every day. Our belief is that a balanced literacy approach prepares students to become lifelong readers.

Our balanced approach includes: read alouds, shared reading, small group instruction, and independent reading. The purpose of read alouds is daily exposure to higher-level, fluent reading. Materials are selected from a variety of genres where rich, shared experiences benefit students at all levels. Using the Core Ready series, shared reading is implemented during whole group teaching while providing standards-based literacy instruction (warm-up, teach, try, clarify). Small group instruction is assessment driven; focusing on the specific needs of students using *The Next Step in Guided Reading*. Groupings are flexible and fluid to meet the children's needs as their skills develop. Every day students spend time reading "just-right" books of their choosing and are given opportunities to "book shop". Student choice, book talks, reader's theater, and reader's workshop are practices used at Bannach to get students excited and engaged in reading.

The writing component of our literacy program places a strong emphasis on teacher modeling, shared writing with students, guided writing, independent writing and recognition of student work. Students are engaged in the writing process daily which includes spelling at their individual levels, varied activities, instruction, and checkpoints to ensure continued development. Bannach students are regularly seen journaling, researching and report writing, composing poetry, writing to persuade others, and creating stories, such as folktales, to demonstrate their learning. Writing is celebrated as students share final pieces with audiences including book buddies, peers, families, and staff. Students participate in Authorship Night, Poetry Cafe, and Sauntering Through the Decades. These celebrations demonstrate the importance of writing within our school culture.

The district has adopted the Bridges (supplemented by Number Corner) and Math Expressions series with rich methods which lead to in-depth discussions, problem solving, and mini-lessons. Hands-on learning and math games are significant components within daily instruction. Math projects such as toothpick bridges allow students to apply math concepts to the real world. Bannach teachers partner with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) math department to offer unique, hands-on learning experiences for the children. Staff members differentiate math instruction to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, with the assistance of technology, students have the opportunity to excel at their own pace through various online programs. As a result, students are actively engaged in practicing math skills and concepts.

In the areas of science and social studies, we value integration of subject matter, infusing language arts within these content areas, and giving students the connections from one area to another using real world experiences. Science units are enhanced with hands-on applications that vary from site visits to experiments/activities which concretely show direct connections of the content in the real world. Bannach strives to include local, regional and global partners to assist in the facilitation of core curricular concepts. All students (K-6) benefit from the district's outdoor classroom at the school forest each year where activities include: animal and plant identification and adaptations, constructing wildlife shelters, pond study, orienteering, constructing solar powered devices, and various seasonal activities. Several grade levels have the opportunity to participate in team building exercises on the low ropes course as well. Our 3rd-5th graders also have the opportunity to participate in a STEM Scouting Program which incorporates hands-on experiments which infuse academic concepts into the delivery model.

Social studies instruction and opportunities are similar to science, while including real-life experiences natural to our area. Geographically, we are rich in agriculture and service industries, which enables students

to make immediate connections while integrating them into the larger community. Our curriculum provides authentic connections to the community by visiting local settlements and landmarks. Students visit local farms, cranberry bogs, greenhouses, banks, museums, and parks as a routine extension of the curriculum. Students participate in global awareness through various events such as: Holidays Around the World, the MaKah Foundation for clean water projects in Africa, National Read Aloud Day with authors worldwide, and partnerships with international students from the local university. We believe in bringing a variety of opportunities right to our doorstep through the Junior Achievement Program by inviting guests to share their knowledge and insights with students on financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurial experiences.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In 2012, the district supported restructuring the instructional delivery model used for many years to change to a six-day rotation for specials, which supports a daily, 45 minute common planning time for general education teachers. In a six-day rotation, students have two sessions of physical education and general music, while having one day each of art and library. This model lends itself well so classroom teachers can easily meet to discuss student data and curriculum approaches to maximize student learning.

K-6th grade students enjoy general music to acquire skills in multiple ways. Not only does learning to sing or play an instrument foster a love of music, but replicated studies have shown that the spatial-temporal reasoning employed in music learning helps students to perform better in other areas of study, honing their ability to visualize the steps of a problem. Singing together also supports language acquisition and fluency, aiding in verbal and social development. In addition, high-quality music education has been shown to increase scores on standardized tests. Our music instruction includes singing, movement, playing instruments, while analyzing and decoding the structure of music in order to fully understand how to make and enjoy music. Students have the opportunity to play classroom instruments K-6, while 5th and 6th graders can choose to be in band and/or orchestra.

The visual art department provides diversity in education through the four pillars of creating, presenting, responding, and connecting. Art promotes visual literacy through the study and experience of: fine art design, culture and ethnicity, art history, visual communication, and community/public art. This year, students at Bannach participated in real world projects which impacted the community. Two examples are: Paint the Plow (students designed and painted a local snow plow blade) and a mixed-media piece to be displayed at the Stevens Point Sculpture Park. Throughout the year, student work is exhibited at district offices, the public library, along with local businesses. The students are encouraged to participate in the Passport Program, which promotes visiting and experiencing various art opportunities in the community with their families. The goal is for students to develop an understanding that artists shape and influence the way the world is viewed.

Our physical education program provides an interactive environment embedded with social skills. The lessons focus on movement, nutrition, wellness, and PBIS strategies. Emphasis is on respect, fair play, sportsmanship, and responsible behavior. Research shows a connection between movement and the brain's readiness for deep learning. Activities and lessons are incorporated to get student's heart rates elevated and encourage aerobic conditioning. The PBIS strategies have a direct correlation and positive impact on student relationships and classroom behavior.

During library instruction, students learn critical skills necessary for researching, citing sources, and digital citizenship. Students learn how to utilize the online card catalog in order to locate, organize, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, and cite their source needed for research. In the realm of digital citizenship, students are learning 21st century skills which enable them to collaborate and communicate respectfully and effectively online while protecting private information. In addition, students learn valuable anti-bullying techniques. The Bannach library houses a wide range of books, resources and formats for students to continue to develop their love of reading.

Bannach partners with the university to offer practicum students opportunities to share their skills in language development. For example, our 1st graders benefit from learning American Sign Language, the 3rd graders explore the Chinese culture, and 6th graders infuse the German language to support their WWII unit

in social studies. We believe that these exposures will enable our students in becoming involved and well-rounded, global citizens.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The students at Bannach School have diverse needs and learning styles. We believe that all students can and will achieve. Bannach teachers strive to meet the learner's educational demands and nurture their growth using research-based instructional methods and interventions. Common Core State Standards have shaped and driven our instructional methods from Kindergarten through 6th grade. Differentiated instruction is used to diversify our content process and learning environment through the use of flexible grouping within the regular and special education settings. In addition, technology is used to support, enhance, and promote student engagement and learning. The use of Chromebooks, tablets, SMART Boards or Mimio-Teach Bars in every classroom have enhanced instruction and promote student choice.

Student learning and success is kept at the forefront of instructional decisions and implementation of best practices. The master schedule supports and allocates 120 minutes daily for English Language Arts (ELA) instruction and 75 minutes for math instruction. Teachers and students meet in small groups based on targeted skill development. It is common to see a gradual release model, "I do, we do, you do," in progress during core instruction.

In order to meet the diverse needs of students, staff use a variety of instructional methods, interventions, and assessments. Our school has fully implemented the RtI framework. Primary grades are given formal assessments throughout the year including the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), Diagnostic Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2), and Number Corner. Intermediate grades are assessing using NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and DRA2. Teachers meet frequently during the year to set goals and to check their student's progress. Students not on track to making at least one full year of growth, are further assessed and given additional supports through the RtI model and monitored using AIMSweb.

Bannach teachers use formal and informal assessments to gauge student understanding of the CCSS. Informal assessments include: hand signals to indicate a student's degree of understanding, think-pair-share, slate assessments, conferences, goal setting, and observing student work. These informal assessments provide teachers with a glimpse of the class as a whole, while making adjustments in instruction to allow all students to understand the content. Our combined efforts ensure that our students are achieving and learning at high levels.

Since Bannach is not a Title I school, there is a need to maximize the student supports with the time allocated to the building. The focus for the reading support specialist is to provide a second layer of instruction for students identified as needing intensive interventions, predominantly in 1st and 2nd grade. The master schedule has a built-in 30 minute intervention block to support students requiring interventions and extensions with the curriculum. Staff utilizes research-based interventions in reading and math while also implementing emotional regulation materials to maximize instruction. We strive to find the answer that makes sense for a child when they are struggling, but do not stop the interventions that are in place and working. By adding another layer, we can immediately address the student's needs.

Staff infuse multiple approaches to literacy through using Core Ready, Next Step in Guided Reading, Reading A to Z (RAZ KIDS), Words Their Way, Interactive Read Alouds, and materials developed by Tara West around the CCSS. It is common to find the children engaged in songs that are fun ways of learning. Language arts instruction focuses around: reading strategies, story elements, phonics awareness and instruction, building background knowledge, activating prior knowledge, making connections and increasing sight word knowledge and fluency.

Over the past five years, Bannach's students, staff, and parents have worked hard toward student success. In that process, we increased our overall school report card rating from 70.4 in 2012-13, to 90.4 in 2016-17, while closing the achievement gap in both ELA and Math. In 2012-13, our ELA scores were 31.8, and in 2016-17 they raised to 44.4, with a total increase of 12.6 points. More noteworthy are our scores in Math; 2012-13 they were 21.3, and in 2016-17 they increased to 47.9 points. Teachers establish learning goals for

all students with one year's growth being the minimum expectation. We attribute student gains to aligning the curriculum with the CCSS and ensuring that all students have the foundational skills necessary to be successful.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Walking through Bannach's doors, everyone feels a sense of acceptance and belonging. Students are greeted by name, with personalized conversations, and may offer hugs or high-fives. Staff interact with students within the school setting and the community as well. Several examples are attending sporting events, theater productions, dance recitals, and shared lunches which foster an environment of trust. Many of our students return to visit with former teachers and assist with activities that left lasting impressions.

Research suggests a collaborative structure is key to building positive cultures. We emulate this by keeping open lines of communication between special education and unit teams. Staff recently took a climate survey which found that 92% of staff feel valued, and 97% of staff feel that students respect one another. Staff are given the autonomy to adapt/adjust district provided resources to meet the needs of their students. They support one another through life events including celebrations and difficult situations. In addition, staff address social and emotional learning using several approaches and varied curricula. Lessons from the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, Zones of Regulation, and social learning stories from We Thinkers are foundations relied upon to meet students' needs.

Staff have a mindset that focuses on solutions. We share concerns about our performance, as well as the students and families we support. The goal is start small and build on successes. We feel these philosophies and practices are reasons we have closed the achievement gap on the Wisconsin Forward Exam.

The PAWS Pride Team focuses on projects: skits for PBIS school-wide assemblies (safety, kindness, respect, and responsibility), visiting with students so no one eats breakfast alone, and greeting people upon entering school. Kids Care Club is a nation-wide movement developing compassion and inspiring a spirit of volunteering in children. Third and fourth graders work collaboratively with staff implementing hands-on service projects locally, nationally, and globally. Projects include: making fleece blankets for a local crisis center, collecting tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, and collecting footwear for individuals in Guatemala.

The 5th and 6th grade Safety Cadets assist fellow Bannach Bulldogs with safety and school rules. Cadets demonstrate responsibility, maturity, leadership, and a willingness to help others. In fall, they assist kindergarten students with lunch, navigating the school, and boarding the buses.

Student Council representatives (4th-6th grade) have opportunities to learn effective leadership which influences a positive school climate. Projects include: Adopt-A-Highway, Fill-A-Stocking/Fill-A-Need, Operation Bootstrap, and organizing theme days and fundraisers. Several benefits from the council's initiatives are the school flag, a water bottle refill station, and shade trees for the playground.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

One of Bannach's greatest assets is its sense of community and parental involvement. The school community embraces this concept as one of the core values within the school culture. We strive to continually focus on how our school emanates this message throughout the school, and its role in being a member of the larger community. Our school's participation in various projects exemplifies our commitment to a greater community and contributes to the warm, welcoming environment here at Bannach Elementary.

Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is one of our greatest support systems. Our school has been enriched by their hard work and dedication through numerous outlets. Our most recent project which has made a great difference is enhancing our playground. Through fundraising efforts, they purchased additional playground equipment, Buddy Benches, shade pavilions, and trees to improve our playground. The PTO continually organizes events that promote Bannach's sense of family and community including sponsoring movie nights, skating/sledding events, game nights, swim nights, and an activity day with

outreach into community programs. The culminating event for the year is the Fun Fair which celebrates the successes throughout the year and includes volunteers from numerous organizations (Target, Kohls, National Honor Society, and local businesses).

We are fortunate that our school environment lends itself to open lines of communication with families. Our school culture embraces numerous methods to facilitate information to both families and the greater community. On a daily basis, classrooms are supported with approximately 30-40 volunteers (parents, grandparents, local leaders/business). Through these opportunities we are fortunate to be able to effectively communicate achievements and challenges.

Parents and the community are continually informed using multiple platforms. Social media allows an opportunity to highlight Bannach's academic and social achievements. It provides an avenue in which families can remain connected and involved. Staff communicates daily/weekly with families in regard to their child's successes or needs. There are several events showcasing student accomplishments. A few such events are Authorship Night, Poetry Cafe, Sauntering through the Decades, Bridge Building, Friendship Concert, Reader's Workshop, etc.

Area businesses recognize our 6th grade student successes in academics, leadership, and community involvement. Local leaders are included in Bannach's celebrations and events promoting student engagement. For example, the mayor reads to students, plants trees on Arbor Day, and talks about local citizenship. The public library partners with the school to ensure students are sustaining reading during the summer. Another instance is the Spring into Action Project. A local church along with community volunteers annually assist schools in enhancing their physical learning environments in various ways (building structures, landscaping, equipment, etc.). All of these activities allow Bannach's students and families the opportunity for continuous school improvement.

3. Professional Development:

Over the past several years, district professional development has revolved around aligning teacher materials and practices with the CCSS, social and emotional learning, and technology. Keynote speakers have included Steven Layne who emphasizes read alouds, Eric Hartwig's message around mental health, Rick Wormeli's work on standards-based grading, and Sandra Weaver as a trainer from Jan Richardson's Next Step in Guided Reading. The district supports enriching teacher's knowledge by offering training/courses throughout the year to support student outcomes. Monthly technology talks have supported staff in incorporating the 4C's (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity) into their instructional delivery. Staff received additional training this year to use the new data warehouse and it's analytic tools to maximize conversations related to student achievement.

Additional professional development at Bannach has focused on topics which directly impact our approaches based upon student needs. Since our population has a high percentage of children diagnosed with Autism, staff implement the Zones of Regulation and the Incredible Flexible You/We Thinkers. These frameworks emphasize systematic, cognitive behavioral approaches used to teach self-regulation and social skills. To increase early literacy skills, primary elementary staff has been trained in many methods, one of those being Tucker Signing, which connects kinesthetic movement to sound production. As a staff, we have been participating in Ross Greene's work around Collaborative and Proactive Solutions as our population of social/emotional needs have increased through the years. Staff read relevant articles and discuss different approaches which focus around student achievement. In addition, the building leadership team attends the annual statewide Data Summit Convention to find new ways to look at and use data to improve student achievement.

Our building administrator actively seeks out professional development at state and national levels. She seeks alternate resources and approaches which inspire staff to think outside the box. This encourages teachers to exercise their professional autonomy in using best practices within their classrooms in order to maximize student growth. This mindset enables staff to use a blend of district recommended resources and additional practices to guide their instruction.

For new teachers to be successful, our school embodies a rich, collaborative approach to mentoring. It is a climate of working together in a non-evaluative way to enhance learning opportunities and experiences for all students. The new teachers engage in ongoing professional development to incorporate research-based, best practices. The system lends itself to a natural process of continuous reflection on instructional approaches, which incorporate open collaboration with colleagues to analyze data and plan instruction. Bannach staff place a significant emphasis on engaging in shared practices designed to impact student achievement and future teacher development.

4. School Leadership:

Bannach is a warm, welcoming environment that strives to empower everyone to lead by example. The school leadership team consists of the principal, a psychologist, four instructional leaders, teachers, educational support staff, students, parents, and community members. We believe in a shared leadership approach, as it creates and fosters a positive learning environment for all our students.

Teams meet regularly to discuss ideas to ensure and promote student achievement. For instance, the entire staff analyzes data from the state and district tests to guide their instruction. Clustered grade bands meet weekly to review student achievement/progress, implementation of PBIS incentives, and curricular programming needs. We recognize that students are the most important asset, and we are dedicated to creating a community which works together to improve instruction.

School leadership encompasses both adults and children. Bannach has established programs that empower student leadership. A few of our programs utilized are Safety Cadets, PAWS Pride Team, and Student Council. A prime example of the strength of student voice is best personified by one of our Girl Scout Troops requesting an ice skating rink to be installed on the playground. The troop composed a letter asking the principal to consider the idea. In their communication, they provided rational and ways in which the rink would enhance recess opportunities for students and their families to enjoy the Wisconsin winter weather.

The PTO works collaboratively with the principal and staff to promote student success. They have supported several of our initiatives including the 1:1 Chromebook concept, purchasing online programs for struggling/excelling readers, planning rewards to celebrate achievement, and playground enhancement projects. The PTO's volunteer coordinator works to ensure parents are involved in numerous activities within the school day. For instance, parent volunteers assist with hearing and vision screening, popcorn days, and classroom activities. They also organize family and student events which promote student leadership.

Community leadership plays a vital role within our school leadership as well. We feel it is important for students to understand that people are not only leaders in our community but within our school. Throughout the school year, we work in collaboration with the UWSP and our high school to utilize student assistance within our classrooms and programs. Members of sports teams read with students, run activities at the Fun Fair and chaperone events. We are fortunate to have firefighters and police liaisons working within our school to keep us safe and provide educational programs which impact situations outside of the school setting. We believe in a philosophy of working together, and know that when all stakeholders are engaged in a sense of a larger community, the outcome will be greater.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The love for literacy is what sets Bannach Elementary apart from other schools. The joy of reading is focused from the very beginning of Kindergarten by "selling books" to acquire interest in reading. Kindergarten staff emphasize the illustrations, authors, themes, and personal connections to their own love of literacy. As the students progress into 1st grade, "a new book a day" becomes the primary focus. With each grade level building upon the love fostered in years prior, Bannach is able to continually promote the importance and relevance of literacy as the foundation of learning. Each grade places significant emphasis on shared read alouds, guided reading groups, and working collaboratively among grade levels to "buddy up" to enhance the spirit of reading. Numerous reading approaches allow for diversity to be applied in various avenues across the grades and curriculum areas.

Bannach has a long standing tradition of an annual Read-In Trivia event in May. The emphasis is to read 25 books that correlate with a theme. Students and their families work together for six weeks reading, viewing, and discussing the featured books. With the end of the year approaching, Bannach has found this event instrumental in maintaining student focus and emphasizing the importance of reading. Each year, over half of the student body participates and form teams to compete; often these teams span with members K-6. This is one example of how Bannach goes above and beyond to ensure its students embrace the love of reading.

Bannach employs numerous ways to incorporate community involvement within the literacy components. We have a strong partnership with the UWSP education department. Yearly, dozens of practicum and pre-service teachers work with our students and staff to maintain high-quality literacy programming. Bannach also uses the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in our lower primary classrooms to aid in practicing early literacy skills. In addition, the middle primary grades utilize the United Way's Learn for Life Program. These community volunteer tutors work weekly with students one-to-one to strengthen literacy skills and specific reading strategies. Another strong component is the interaction our students have with service learning dogs. Volunteers, along with staff members, bring in their dogs weekly to provide social and emotional support. According to research, therapy dogs provide children with both cognitive and physiological support to enhance overall student performance. The dogs have become an integral part of the Bannach school family. Enrichment activities such as these have enabled us to close the achievement gap by reaching students in ways which incorporate meaningful experiences that enhance overall learning outcomes.

Lifelong learning through the heart of literacy truly sets Bannach Elementary apart.